

Message Text

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17

ACTION SCS-03

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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2941

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0153

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, PFOR, LY

SUBJECT: WILLIAM THOMAS CASE

REF: TRIPOLI 0130, TRIPOLI 113, TRIPOLI 31, 75 TRIPOLI 1457

1. OUR OPTIMISM OF LAST WEEK ABOUT THE THOMAS CASE WAS SHAKEN AS A RESULT OF HIS MOST RECENT MEETING WITH MRAWHIL ON FEBRUARY 2.

2. MRAWHIL'S QUESTIONING OF THOMAS CENTERED ON THE OLD ACCUSATION BY ONE NURI AMUSH, WHICH WAS THE BASIS FOR THOMAS' ARREST SIX MONTHS AGO. BRIEFLY, AMUSH CLAIMS THAT THOMAS TRIED TO RECRUIT HIM AS AN AGENT FOR ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE. AMUSH NOW CLAIMS THIS TOOK PLACE IN 1973 IN FLORENCE, BUT THOMAS SAYS HE HAS NEVER BEEN TO FLORENCE.

3. THOMAS ASKED IF HE COULD HAVE HIS PASSPORT AND BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. MRAWHIL REPLIED THAT BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUING INTEREST IN THE CASE BY CERTAIN HIGHER OFFICIALS HIS OFFICE COULD NOT ALLOW THOMAS' DEPARTURE EVEN IF HE WANTED TO. HE TOLD THOMAS HE WOULD BE CALLED BACK IN TWO WEEKS TO DEFEND HIMSELF AGAINST AMUSH'S ALLEGATIONS, THOMAS, ALTHOUGH RELIEVED THAT HE IS NOT APPARENTLY BEING CONNECTED WITH ANTHING THAT HAPPENED WHILE HE LIVED IN LIBYA, CONFIDENTIAL

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IS UPSET THAT THE LIBYANS HAVE BEEN HOLDING HIM ALL

THISTIME FOR SOMETHING THAT ALLEGEDLY HAPPENED AFTER
HE MOVED AWAY FROM LIBYA AND IN A CITY HE HAS NEVER
VISITED.

4. EMBASSY WAS ABLE TO CONTACT MRAWHIL ON FEBRUARY 3
AND ASK FOR AN EXPLANATION OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS.
MRAWHIL SAID THAT AS A RESULT OF THE PREVIOUS DAY'S
SESSIONS HE WAS NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED OF THOMAS'
INNOCENCE AND HENCE COULD NOT ORDER HIS RELEASE
(SCENARIO 1, TRIPOLI 113). HE SAYS HE WILL TURN THE
FILE OVER TO A PANEL OF JUDGES IN A FEW DAYS. THE
JUDGES, (SCENARIO 2, REFTTEL) WOULD EITHER ORDER
THOMAS RELEASED OR IMPOSE SENTENCE. MRAWHIL WAS NOT
CERTAIN HOW SOON THE JUDGES WOULD SEE THOMAS, BUT HE
THOUGHT PERHAPS IN TWO WEEKS.

5. NOW PLAN FURTHER MEETING WITH MFA NORTH AMERICAN
DIRECTOR AND WILL LEAVE AIDE MEMOIRE ALONG FOLLOWING
LINES:

THE EMBASSY APPRECIATES PAST EFFORTS BY
THE MINISTRY TO SEE THAT JUSTICE IS DONE TO MR.
THOMAS.

AT THE SAME TIME, IN VIEW OF MR. THOMAS'
CONTINUED DETENTION, THE EMBASSY FEELS BOUND TO
EXPRESS AGAIN THE EXTREME CONCERN OF THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT IN THIS CASE. THE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL
CULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WHICH EXIST BETWEEN
US ARE BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT OUR NATIONALS
IN EACH OTHER'S COUNTRY WILL BE FAIRLY TREATED,
AND WITH THIS IN MIND, THE EMBASSY HOPES THAT THE
MINISTRY WILL AGAIN BRING ITS GOOD OFFICES TO
BEAR ON THIS MATTER, AND THAT MR. THOMAS WILL BE
ALLOWED BY THE COMPETENT LIBYAN JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES
AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT TO REJOIN HIS FAMILY.

6. DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS ON PROPOSED APPROACH REQUESTED.

7. FOR MADRID: SINCE QADHAFI IN THE PAST HAS SHOWN
HIMSELF TO BE SENSITIVE TO PRESSURE FROM AMNESTY INTER-
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NATIONAL, MRS. THOMAS MAY WISH TO SEND AN APPEAL THROUGH
THEIR CHANNELS.
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